

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the present amendment and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-15 are currently pending. Claims 1 and 9 have been amended by the present amendment. No new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0088542 to Daude et al. (hereinafter “the ‘542 application”) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0266420 to Malinen et al. (hereinafter “the ‘420 application”); Claims 5, 7, and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘542 and ‘420 applications, further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0039240 to Sutanto (hereinafter “the ‘240 application”); Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘542, ‘420, and ‘240 applications, further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0208151 to Haverinen et al. (hereinafter “the ‘151 application”); and Claims 9-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘542 application in view of the ‘240 application.

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a remote-access VPN mediating method in a system wherein VPN client units and a VPN gateway unit are connected to an IP network; communication units are connected to a local area network placed under the management of the VPN gateway unit; and a remote-access VPN by a tunneling protocol is implemented between an arbitrary one of the VPN client units and the VPN gateway unit connected to said IP network and an arbitrary one of the communication units connected to the local area network placed under the management of the VPN gateway unit, where VPN represents virtual private network, the method comprising the steps of: (a) sending an access control list containing information indicative of a private IP address assigned to said communication unit

to a mediating apparatus on said IP network from said VPN gateway unit, said mediating apparatus being a separate and distinct apparatus from the VPN gateway unit; (b) storing said access control list in said mediating apparatus in correspondence to said VPN gateway unit; (c) retrieving, by said mediating apparatus, an IP address of said VPN gateway unit in response to a request from said VPN client unit, acquiring the private IP address of the corresponding communication unit from said access control list, sending the acquired IP address of said VPN gateway unit and the acquired private IP address to said VPN client unit, sending an IP address of said VPN client unit to said VPN gateway unit, generating mutual authentication information for setting up an authenticated encrypted tunnel between said VPN client unit and said VPN gateway unit, and sending said mutual authentication information to both of said VPN client unit and said VPN gateway unit; and (d) setting up said authenticated encrypted tunnel between said VPN client unit and said VPN gateway unit by use of said mutual authentication information, and implementing remote access through said encrypted tunnel by use of the private IP address of said communication unit. No new matter has been added.¹

Regarding the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), the Office Action asserts that the '542 application discloses everything in Claim 1 with the exception of setting up an authenticated encrypted tunnel between the VPN client unit and the VPN gateway unit,² and relies on the '420 application to remedy that deficiency.

The '542 application is directed to a method for permitting a first device on a virtual private network to communicate with a second device outside the virtual private network, including the steps of authenticating, at an interconnection device, the first device; authenticating, at the interconnection device, VPN parameters related to connecting and forwarding characteristics of the VPN with which the first device is associated; and

¹ See, e.g., Figure 1 and the discussion related thereto in the specification.

² See page 6 of the Office Action.

forwarding data from the first device to the second device via the VPN and the interconnection device. In particular, the '542 application discloses that routing tables for setting a connection between VPNA-VPNC on the network 170 and VPND-VPNF on the network 180 are held in virtual routers VR1-VR5, and that each of F&FE 261 to 266 performs routing for an input packet by referring to the corresponding ones of the VRs.³ Further, the '542 application discloses that the interconnection between devices 100, 110, 120 and 130, 140, and 150 on different VPNs are made through gateway 160, which provides information necessary for interconnection upon request.

In particular, as shown in the attachment, the '542 patent discloses that, in paragraph [0051], that in order to interconnect first and second devices on first and second VPNs, a gateway can forward first VPN parameters to the second device on the second VPN, such that the gateway controls communication between the first and second devices through the first and second VPNs.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '542 application fails to disclose sending an access control list containing information indicative of a private IP address assigned to the communication unit to a mediating apparatus on the IP network from the VPN gateway unit, said mediating apparatus being a separate and distinct apparatus from the VPN gateway unit, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, the background section of the '542 application clearly states that the access control list resides in the routers. See paragraphs [0044]-[0046] in the '542 application. Applicants respectfully submit that the routers disclosed by the '542 application do not correspond to the mediating apparatus recited in Claim 1. Further, the '542 gateway 160 also does not perform the functionality of the claimed mediating apparatus, as is clear from the attachment.

³ See Fig. 2 and para. [0101] in the '542 application.

In particular, Applicants note that the mediating apparatus recited in Claim 1 is a separate and distinct apparatus from the VPN gateway unit. However, in the '542 system, the gateway device 160 operates to interconnect devices on different VPNs, which is not a function performed by the claimed mediating apparatus. Rather, in a non-limiting example, the claimed mediating apparatus is dedicated to helping the VPN client unit acquire necessary information to establish an authenticated and encrypted tunnel between the VPN client and the VPN gateway unit.

Further, regarding the disclosure in paragraph [0078] of the '542 application, Applicants note that this disclosure states that end devices on a VPN may be hosts, routing devices, gateways, or other devices known to be connectable to a gateway through a VPN. However, Applicants note that such devices are directly involved in communication traffic. However, in a non-limiting example, Applicants note that the mediating apparatus recited in Claim 1 only sends the connection parameters to the VPN client unit, but a VPN is not located between the mediating apparatus and the VPN client unit, and the mediating apparatus is not involved in communication traffic, unlike the '542 gateway.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the '542 application fails to disclose storing the access control list in the mediating apparatus in correspondence to the VPN gateway unit, as recited in Claim 1. Rather, paragraph [0044] in the '542 application merely discloses that the access control list reside in routers that control the traffic flow, but does not describe anything about storing an ACL in correspondence with a VPN gateway unit, since each router holds only its own ACL.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the '542 application fails to disclose retrieving, by the mediating apparatus, an IP address of the VPN gateway unit in response to a request from the VPN client unit, acquiring a private address of the corresponding communication unit from the access control list, sending the acquired IP address of the VPN

gateway unit and the acquired private IP address to the VPN client unit, sending an IP address of the VPN client unit to the VPN gateway unit, generating mutual authentication information for setting up an authenticated encrypted tunnel between the VPN client unit and the VPN gateway unit, and sending the said mutual authentication information to both of the VPN client unit and the VPN gateway unit, as recited in amended Claim 1.

Rather, the '542 application merely discloses that the interconnecting device (gateway 160) identifies VPN parameters relating to connecting and forwarding characteristics of the VPN, but paragraph [0044] of the '542 application describes that the conventional ACL-based management system basically manages ACLs residing in routers, but does not disclose anything about the mediating apparatus that retrieves a private address of the communication unit from the ACL held in the mediating apparatus and sending it to the VPN client unit, as recited in Claim 1. Further, Applicants note that paragraph [0095] of the '542 application discloses that the F&FE of the gateway 160 identifies a destination IP address from the IP source address in a receipt packet, but does not disclose anything about the mediating apparatus that sends an IP address of the VPN client to the VPN gateway unit through which the VPN client unit is trying to access a communication unit, as required by Claim 1.

Further, Applicants note that paragraph [0108] of the '542 application discloses that routing configuration filtering rules are formulated in the digital certificate. However, Applicants respectfully submit that this disclosure is unrelated to mutual authentication in which each of the two parties confirm authenticity of the counter-party. Moreover, the routing rules are provided in virtual routers VR1-VR5 in the gateway 160 in the '542 system, and the F&FEs 261-266 perform connection with reference to the routing rules downloaded from the VR1-VR5 routers.

Further, Applicants note that the steps in Claim 1 are clearly part of a process for "setting up said authenticated encrypted tunnel between said VPN client unit and said VPN

gateway unit...,” such that the extracting of source and destination IP addresses in a packet by a router/gateway unit, as disclosed by the ‘542 application, is (1) irrelevant to the process of Claim 1, and (2) is not a disclosure of sending the two claimed IP addresses to the VPN client, as required by Claim 1.

The ‘420 application is directed to a system for providing secure mobile connectivity that implements mobile IP home agent functionality via distributed components. In particular, the ‘420 application is directed to a system for a secure connection between mobile nodes and an internal private network using VPN technology. Paragraph [0004] of the ‘420 application discloses that a VPN gateway sets a tunnel secured by authentication and encryption.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that the ‘420 application fails to cure the deficiencies of the ‘542 application with respect to steps a, b, and c recited in Claim 1. In particular, the ‘420 application fails to disclose the mediating apparatus recited in Claim 1. Specifically, the ‘420 application fails to disclose the step of sending an access control list containing information indicative of a private IP address assigned to the communication unit to a mediating apparatus on the IP network from the VPN gateway unit, said mediating apparatus being a separate and distinct apparatus from the VPN gateway unit, or storing the access control list in the mediating apparatus in correspondence to the VPN gateway unit. Further, the ‘420 application fails to disclose retrieving, by the mediating apparatus, an IP address of the VPN gateway unit in response to a request from the VPN client unit, acquiring the private IP address of the corresponding communication unit from the access control list, sending the acquired private IP address of the VPN gateway unit and the acquired private address to the VPN client unit, and sending an IP address of the VPN client unit to the VPN gateway unit, as required by Claim 1.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of the '542 and '420 applications are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest the mediating apparatus and steps (a), (b) and (c) recited in Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1.

Amended Claim 9 is directed to a remote-access VPN mediating apparatus which is built on an IP network to implement a remote-access VPN representing virtual private network in a system wherein: VPN client units and a VPN gateway unit are connected to the IP network; communication units are connected to a local area network placed under the management of the VPN gateway unit; and a remote-access VPN by a tunneling protocol is implemented between an arbitrary one of said VPN client units and said VPN gateway unit connected to said IP network and an arbitrary one of said communication units connected to said local area network placed under the management of said VPN gateway unit, said apparatus being a separate and distinct apparatus from the gateway unit and comprising: (1) ACL storage means for storing an access control list, hereinafter referred to as ACL, sent from said VPN gateway unit and containing information indicative of a private IP address assigned to said communication unit; (2) authentication/access authorization control means for authenticating said VPN client unit and said VPN gateway unit, and for executing access authorization control; (3) IP address acquiring means for referring to said access control list to acquire the private IP address assigned to said communication unit, and for searching a domain name server to acquire an IP address assigned to said VPN gateway unit; (4) authentication information generating means for generating mutual authentication information for setting up an authenticated encrypted tunnel between said VPN client unit and said VPN gateway unit; and (5) communication means for sending the IP address of said VPN gateway unit, the private IP address of said communication unit and said mutual

authentication information to said VPN client unit, and for sending the IP address of said VPN client unit and said mutual authentication information to said VPN gateway unit.

Regarding the rejection of Claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) the Office Action asserts that the '542 application discloses everything in Claim 9 with the exception of IP address acquiring means for referring the access control list to acquire the private IP address assigned to the communication unit, and for searching a domain name server to acquire the IP address assigned to the VPN gateway unit, and relies on the '240 application to remedy that deficiency.

As discussed above, the '542 application is directed to a method for permitting a first device on a VPN to communicate with a second device outside the VPN. However, as discussed above, the '542 application fails to disclose a mediating apparatus that is separate and distinct from the gateway unit. In particular, the '542 application fails to disclose ACL storage means for storing an access control list sent from the VPN gateway unit, as well as authentication/authorization control means for authenticating the VPN client unit and the VPN gateway unit. Further, the '542 application fails to disclose functionality of the IP address acquiring means, the authentication information generating means, and the communication means recited in Claim 9. As discussed above with respect to Claim 1, the '542 application does not disclose sending the two claimed IP addresses to the VPN client unit as recited in Claim 9.

The '240 application is directed to a method of accessing an embedded web server of a broadband access terminal. In particular, in paragraph [0031], the '240 application discloses that the user terminal sends an HTTP request to the website of the obtained IP address to the gateway. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '240 application fails to cure the deficiencies of the '542 application with respect to the mediating apparatus recited in Claim 9. Further, Applicants note that the Office Action does not rely on the '240

application as disclosing these limitations. In particular, Applicants respectfully submit that the '240 application fails to disclose the ACL storage means, IP address acquiring means, the authentication information generating means, and the communication means of a mediating apparatus, as recited in Claim 9.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of the '542 and '240 applications are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest the ACL storage means, the IP address acquiring means, the authentication information generating means, and the communication means recited in Claim 9. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 9 (and all associated dependent claims) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 9.

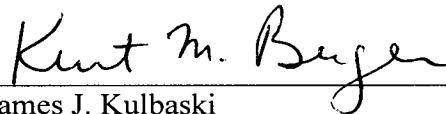
Regarding the rejection of dependent Claims 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Applicants respectfully submit that the '240 and '151 applications fail to remedy the deficiencies of the '542 and '420 applications, as discussed above. Regarding dependent Claim 5, the '240 application relates to a method for accessing a webserver and discloses MAC addresses, but does not disclose searching a domain name server to acquire the IP address assigned to the VPN gateway unit. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 5-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 are rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1 and 9 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the cited references.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kurt M. Berger", is written over a horizontal line.

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